

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated May 3, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application with claims 1-11 having been withdrawn. With this response, claims 12, 13 and 20-22 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claims 12-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent Application No. 2005/0167036 to Yokoyama et al. (hereinafter “Yokoyama”). Claims 12-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 5,407,519 to Joffe et al. (hereinafter “Joffe”).

The rejection to claims 12-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated Yokoyama is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Since Yokoyama has a PCT filing date of February 17, 2003 after the foreign application priority date (November 7, 2002) of the present invention, Applicant submits that Yokoyama is not available as prior art against the present invention. Therefore, Applicant requests that the Examiner’s rejection based on Yokoyama be withdrawn. Applicant files the English translation of the foreign application.

The rejection to claims 12-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated Joffe is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Applicants submit that Joffe does not disclose inherently or explicitly every claimed element.

Claims 12-19 each recites a method of holding a substrate within a substrate bonding apparatus having a combination of features including “providing an upper stage having a contact surface and at least passage intersecting the contact surface.” Joffe disclose a lower stage having a contact surface and at least passage intersecting the contact surface. Applicants submit that

Joffe does not disclose an upper stage having a contact surface and at least passage intersecting the contact surface as recited in claims 12-19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Joffe does not anticipate claims 12-19.

Claims 20-23 each recites a method of holding a substrate to a stage within a substrate bonding apparatus having a combination of features including “transmitting the generated suction force to an application point on a contact surface of an upper stage; and transmitting the generated suction force to an application point at a predetermined distance away from the contact surface of the upper stage.” Applicants submit that Joffe does not disclose at least the above quoted combination of elements recited in the claims. Accordingly Applicants respectfully submit that Joffe does not anticipate claims 20-23.

Applicants believe the application is in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. *A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.*

Dated: August 1, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By  _____

George G. Ballas

Registration No.: 52,587

McKENNA LONG & ALDRIDGE LLP

1900 K Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20006

(202) 496-7500

Attorney for Applicants